

Statement of the Honorable Tim Bishop
FY 2006 Energy & Water appropriations, H.R. 2419
November 9, 2005

Mr. Speaker, I was one of 416 members of this body who voted back in May for a different – and better – energy and water appropriations bill.

But a funny thing happened on the way to the conference committee. Although the House and Senate-passed bills both funded one of this nation's most important analytical research projects – the Relativistic Heavy Ion Collider – which is operated by the Department of Energy's world-class Brookhaven National Laboratory, which I am very proud to represent, somehow this breakthrough research was cut dramatically in conference.

As a result, the RHIC – as it's known – could lay dormant – unused – for 47 weeks out of the year. Why is this project so important? It's designed to re-create conditions of the Big Bang, from which the universe was born and life created.

The federal government has already invested more than \$1 billion – not \$1 million, but \$1 billion – in the construction of this facility, and it simply makes no sense to let such an investment go unused. This is like buying a Porsche and letting it sit in your driveway because you won't pay for gas.

I would challenge my colleagues – and the conference committee – to answer whether there is a more important basic research project in progress?

How then, did the conference justify dis-investing in this project as well as BNL's research into translational neuroimaging and functional nanomaterials?

Could this be an example of the kind of cuts we're beginning to witness as a result of the misguided priorities of the budget reconciliation legislation?

That said, I am deeply grateful for the support of the chairman of the subcommittee, who visited the Lab earlier this year, and the ranking member, who has consistently advocated this research.

I look forward to their continued support and working with them to restore this funding – and protect the jobs at BNL – ideally within these first few months of fiscal year 2006, and upon their approval of reprogramming existing funds with DoE.

Until that happens, Mr. Speaker, I therefore reluctantly oppose this conference report and yield back the balance of time.